

# Production Notes

Journals and notes from the production staff of E:60.



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TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2012

## Graphic Content: Part 1, Deskalo's Dilemma

Arab Spring brought revolution to the Middle East and, inevitably, graphic content to media. In producing a story for E:60 about political repression in Bahrain, Yaron Deskalo found ample video of carnage, much of it shot by non-media with personal devices.

Deskalo's task was to tell the story with proper context, texture, and tone - to use graphic content and not be used by it. Into his Sorcerer's Brew went video of a bloodied man on a gurney, a bloodied protestor on a street, shootings of two protestors on the streets, and a man with a bloodied head on an operating table. Then a snippet gave him pause.

"Someone's head was literally blown up," recalled Deskalo. "A

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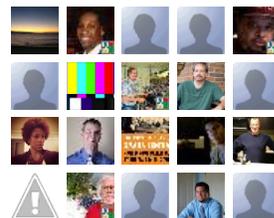
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grenade had opened up his skull and it was in fragments - the guy was being carried and his head was flapping.”

The shot had come from a private flip-cam inside a Bahraini hospital. On the one hand it conveyed the brutality of the conflict. On the other it was repulsive enough that viewers might click away.

The tightrope was familiar to Deskalo. In May 2010 he produced an E:60 piece about Liberians who lost a limb in that country’s civil war more than 20 years ago and who found comfort in playing soccer. That piece, “Survival 1”, featured a severed head on a table and a decapitated body on a street, as well as a maggot-infested skeleton, and tape of a man being clubbed. Those images were appropriate, Deskalo had decided, because the story was about amputees - the graphic content spoke to the theme of the story.

But this call wasn’t as clear. The Bahrain story was about political repression; the injuries were peripheral.

Deskalo’s dilemma, as defined by the Radio Television Digital News Association, is that, “the visual images always overpower the spoken word. Powerful pictures can help explain stories better or they can distort the truth by blurring the important context of the report.”

Explain or distort, either or both, take your pick. ESPN producers routinely wrestle with graphic content.

In June 2010 Outside the Lines produced a show about the dangers of metal bats. Gunnar Sandberg was a high school pitcher in California who nearly died after being hit in the head by a line drive off a metal bat. His parents had the only video of the incident, and they gave it to OTL with the stipulation that the moment of contact - when the ball hit Sandberg’s head - not be shown. But that was what OTL wanted to show.

“We tried to convince them otherwise, because seeing it would make for a more complete telling of the story,” said coordinating producer Tim Hays.

Sandberg’s parents held firm and the moment of contact was not aired.

OTL pushed last summer in its reporting on Shannon Stone, the fan who fell over a center field railing, to his death, at Arlington Stadium trying to catch a ball tossed by outfielder Josh Hamilton. In an interview with a man who sat next to Stone, and tried to grab him, OTL ran tape of the fall not once, but twice.

“The video clearly showed the man trying to grab Mr. Stone, and since it was such an important part of the story we used the video a second time so that the viewer could see what the man was describing,” said Hays.

OTL producers knew the second showing could draw criticism.

“Others might have seen it as gratuitous, but in our judgment it wasn’t,” Hays said.

As often as producers push for graphic content, they pull back.

In a 2009 story on the dangers of freestyle motocross, producer Jose Morales declined to use the crash that killed rider Jeremy Lusk.

“After securing video of the crash and watching it, it was clear to me that I wouldn’t use it,” Morales said. “It was just too violent. Jeremy’s body literally snapped in half. It was gruesome.”

The story, which ran on OTL and SportsCenter, covered Lusk’s death with a SportsCenter announcement, and a sound bite from Lusk after he won a gold medal at the X Games.

Earlier in the piece, Morales showed rider Stephen Murray at the start of a stunt that would end with him paralyzed from the neck

► 2012 (13)

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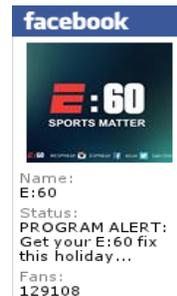
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down. Morales did not have tape of the moment at which Murray snapped his neck. Even if he had, he says he would not have used it.

Instead, Morales dipped to black, carried the announcer's call, and showed the reaction of other riders.

More restraint? OTL reported the story of Bobby Dodd, the former head of the A.A.U. alleged to be a pedophile, and interviewed Ralph West, who claims to have been molested by Dodd. The interview was well along when West, visibly shaken, arose and walked toward the back of the room. Producer Carolyn Hong's cameras stayed on West as he puked. He still was mic'd, and she picked up the sound.

The question was not whether to air the moment - because it conveyed West's distress and made his story more believable - but when.

"We had a number of discussions amongst us, with some people believing that the moment should play up high in our piece," Hong said.

There also was a thought to amplify the sound of West puking. But in the final cut, the moment was aired when it occurred, near the end of the interview, and the sound was not amplified.

Sometimes a compromise is struck.

Producer Ben Houser had graphic photos of the mangled left leg of Nate Winters, a Florida boy who was in a 2008 boating accident and came back to become a high school pitcher. The photos came from Winters' parents, both doctors, with permission to use them.

"The photos were not easy to look at and I don't have a weak stomach," said Houser. "But in the context of the story we determined that you had to see what he went through relative to his coming back and pitching."

Houser's final cut for E:60 found a middle ground.

"We blurred the photos - they're not 100 percent crisp high def in focus," he said. "You can make out that the leg was severed, but we took the edge off."

In the case of the flapping skull, Deskalo put it into a rough cut and showed it to E:60 colleagues.

Producer Martin Khodabakhshian took one look and said, "It's too gross. You're going to lose people."

Nobody disagreed and Deskalo removed it from the final cut.

"At the end of the day we just decided we had so many great images that we didn't want to distract the viewers," Deskalo said.

Part 2 will explore guidelines and best practices for graphic content.

Posted by Steve Marantz on January 17, 2012

Posted by [E:60](#) at [11:50 AM](#)

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2012

Ashley Owens Quinter 1987-2011

As the new year begins we remember Ashley Owens Quinter, who received the lungs of Paco Rodriguez, and breathed through them - with gratitude and exuberance - before she passed away on December 8, at age 24.

Rodriguez was the boxer who died in November 2009, from injuries in the ring, so that others might live, through his organ donations. Ashley lived a bit more than two years with Rodriguez' lungs.

Vin Cannamela, who co-produced the piece on Rodriguez last spring, attended the memorial service for Ashley, in Birdsboro, Pa., on Dec. 18.

The chaplain who presided over her wedding last summer, to high school beau Jesse Quinter, recalled that joyous event:

"At one point she turned to Jesse and said, 'If I died today I would be happy'."

Three other recipients of Paco's organs attended - Alexis Sloan (heart), Meghan Kingsley (liver) and Victoria Davis (kidney, pancreas). The four women had formed a "sisterhood" after they traveled to Chicago last spring, at E:60's behest, to meet Paco's family.

Victoria's husband, Stuart, spoke on behalf of the recipients, and talked about Ashley's kindness.

"It is said that every time a bell rings an angel gets her wings, well, Ashley was an angel on earth," he said.

Attendees received a Mass card, with a photo of Ashley and four hearts, which said, "I think you should never waste a second of your life."

After the service Cannamela reflected on Ashley and the story he co-produced.

"I was struck by everything she did in two years - finish her degree, graduate with honors, start a teaching career, get married, travel," he said.

Asked about his own emotions at the service, Cannamela paused - for several seconds.

Finally, he said, "I guess I was just honored to be there - to be able to pay tribute to her and who she was and how she lived her life and touched people."

He attended, he said, because, "As journalists we sometimes ask a lot of people in doing these types of stories. I don't know if 'obligate' is the right word, but I felt it was the right thing to do. I wanted to see the other recipients and be there for them. In a real way we were the reason they got to know each other. For us to see the bond they created amongst themselves - that's rewarding."

Posted by Steve Marantz Jan 3, 2012

Posted by [E:60](#) at [11:10 AM](#)

Reactions: [funny \(0\)](#) [interesting \(0\)](#) [cool \(0\)](#)

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2011

## Shooting Bahrain

Before the Arab Spring, Yaron Deskalo had produced E:60 stories from India, Liberia, Serbia, England, Spain, Venezuela, Brazil, Mexico and the Dominican Republic. Not bad for a guy from Milwaukee.

And then Bahrain erupted in six weeks of protests, which left 24 dead and 400 missing. Its Sunni royal family imprisoned and tortured elite soccer players, as well as workers at the Formula One racetrack, many of them Shias, who dared to protest. Bahrain is a mere speck of a country on the western shore of the Persian Gulf, but not too small to escape Deskalo's passport.

Shooting in a foreign country, particularly one in upheaval, requires a detailed plan.

"I might have 12 things on a list, but I have a sense of four things we really want, and I prioritize," said Deskalo.

Nothing gets done without a "fixer" - someone who lives there and can act as a guide, intermediary, translator and reporter. Deskalo hired Lubna Takruri, a U-Cal Berkeley Masters of Journalism graduate (2006), who had reported from the Middle East for CNBC and Irish Radio. While Deskalo, reporter Jeremy Schaap and shooters Bill Roach, Joel Edwards and Jessie Edwards applied for media visas, Takruri reached out to potential interview subjects.

"In a foreign country if you don't speak the language you're only as good as your fixer," said Deskalo. "At the end of the day if you can't communicate your vision to the fixer she can't communicate to the government and you will have a hard time getting what you need."

A tight budget limited the shoot to 5 ½ days. First came Oman, another Persian Gulf country slightly larger than Bahrain. Two of Bahrain's top soccer players, the brothers Alaa and Mohammad Hubail, had been banished to Oman. Late in September, after 20 hours of travel, Deskalo's crew arrived in Oman. At Customs he was told he did not have the proper papers for ESPN's gear.

"We were screwed," Deskalo recalled. "It was Wednesday night and Thursday and Friday is the weekend in Oman. My fear was that our gear would be in the airport for two days."

In the morning Deskalo appealed to a press officer at Oman's ministry of information, and his gear was cleared, but half a day was wasted. Still, he got what he needed, in a day and a half.

Next came 3 ½ days in Bahrain, which could be difficult, he worried, if government officials suspected a critical story. Officials were told the story would show "how the uprising affected sports in Bahrain, and how the country was moving forward", Deskalo said. They were told athletes who were in the protests - and subsequently tortured - would be interviewed.

But at the time Bahrain was alone among Arab Spring countries to retain the backing of the Obama administration. This likely worked in

Deskalo's favor.

"I didn't get the sense that they were concerned about a sports network," said Deskalo. "There was no video of torture, and no wounds remained on the athletes. There was a level of arrogance from the royal family in terms of acknowledging the situation."

On the first day he interviewed a soccer official whose comments were too guarded, so Takruri lined up alternative interviews. On the second day, driving to the U.S. Naval base, Deskalo thought a helicopter was shadowing his vehicle, but nothing came of it. Coincidentally, the government handed down prison sentences to several doctors who had protested. Takruri knew the attorney of one of the doctors, and secured an interview.

"You have to adjust on the fly - you only get one opportunity because you're not flying back to Bahrain soon," Deskalo said.

Overall the E:60 crew shot 13 interviews and ample scenery and color. On the last morning, before his flight out, Deskalo still needed an interview with a Formula One official but his request had been ignored. Finally, he took his crew to the lobby of the Formula One office. A flak told him the official was unavailable.

"We can't go back without him," Deskalo insisted.

The flak went into a back room and then returned.

"You can have 10 minutes in his office," he said.

Schaap interviewed the official, also a member of the royal family, who pleaded ignorance to the plight of 27 of his former employees who claimed to have been tortured while in jail. The man in flowing white garb did his best Sgt. Schultz "I know nothing" impersonation, but his furtive eyes spoke otherwise.

"A good moment," said Deskalo.

Posted by Steve Marantz on November 22, 2011

Posted by [E:60](#) at [12:35 PM](#)

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2011

## Risk in Snowtober

On Saturday afternoon, October 29, three E:60 producers worked on three stories at three edit houses - all near, but not on, the ESPN "campus" in Bristol.

Martin Khodabakhshian was at Bluefoot Entertainment in West Hartford, Mike Loftus was at Northern Lights in Bristol, and Matt Rissmiller was at Anderson Productions in Bristol. Each was in a dash to complete a story for the special "Risk" show - about extreme athletes and their deathly feats - scheduled for Tuesday, November 2.

Snow began to fall. It fell and fell, gobs of wet stuff, a record amount for Connecticut in October. Trees bent and power lines

sagged. Lights flickered out and furnaces went dead. Though generators powered the campus, many neighborhoods and homes went dark and cold.

Soon enough, "Risk" was something that crawled off the screen and into the lives of the three producers, and indeed, all ESPN employees and families in central Connecticut.

At Anderson Productions, Rissmiller toiled on a piece about Tyler Bradt, a kayaker who plunges down steep waterfalls. A generator kept Anderson lighted and warm.

Then Rissmiller heard the crack of a tree.

"A large pine tree fell within inches of the post-production facility," said Rissmiller. "The limbs broke a window in a nearby edit suite and caused some water damage."

The tree missed the generator, though. The building had power. The "Legends of the Fall" edit continued.

Executive producer Andy Tennant stopped in, viewed the damage, satisfied his concerns about safety, and headed to New Haven, where he found his home with power.

Over at Northern Lights, Loftus worked on "Kings of the Mountain" - about the 'Red Bull Rampage' mountain bike contest in Utah. At 8:30 p.m. Loftus and editor Nate Hogan called it a day. Loftus returned to his West Hartford home - minus heat and lights.

"It was cold," Loftus recalled. "I had to bundle up and use a lot of blankets."

Khodabakhshian, who conceived the "Risk" show, was in his third day of edit on "Land Sea Air" - about a high liner, free (ocean) diver, and sky diver - with editor Matt McCormick. Preoccupied, neither thought about the storm. But both received calls from their wives - stressed and anxious - so they broke off at 6 p.m. and headed home. Khodabakhshian planned to return later to edit the 'tease'.

West Hartford's streets were shrouded, an apocalypse - Khodabakhshian counted a dozen trees downed. In his car Khodabakhshian took another call from his wife, Shalom, at their West Hartford home with their three children.

"The electrical wires snapped and are sparking like mad," she said. "I think our house is on fire. I called the Fire Department."

Moments later McCormick, at his home without power, texted Khodabakhshian: "WOW. Do not go back to Bluefoot!"

The Khodabakhshian family, without power, bundled up and hunkered down for the night. Khodabakhshian tried to get his Honda Civic off the street, but its battery died, and it was plowed in by two feet of snow. His four-year-old son became ill and vomited. Khodabakhshian made a run for supplies with his 4-Runner, but only after the vehicle spun and almost hit the house and garage.

Rissmiller left Anderson Productions late Saturday evening and drove to his Bristol home. He lost power at midnight as he shoveled his driveway.

"I was shoveling in the dark - awesome," recalled Rissmiller.

By Sunday morning the storm passed, but the temperature plummeted. Tennant returned to the campus and beheld a post-apocalyptic scene. Employees, spouses and children crowded into the cafeteria, seeking food and warmth.

"People were showering in the locker rooms across from where we have E:60 production meetings on Friday," Tennant recalled.

But Loftus and Hogan returned to Northern Lights to find it now without power. Hogan called Bluefoot owner Tim Horgan - by a stroke of luck Bluefoot was spared. Horgan offered Hogan space at Bluefoot, at which point Loftus and Hogan transported an entire edit bay 20 miles to West Hartford and set up in an empty conference room.

By now Loftus was worried.

"All of this is cutting into precious edit time," Loftus recalled.

Khodabakhshian was at Bluefoot on Sunday, too. But as he worked he worried about his wife and kids in their cold house. Shalom tried to find a hotel with power - all were full. Later in the day Horgan invited Khodabakhshian's family to bunk at Bluefoot, in an empty edit room.

"So we packed up," Khodabakhshian recalled. "We got pizzas and moved to Bluefoot and my family was huddled in one room while I edited in the other two rooms at Bluefoot."

"It was wild. Checking on kids. Encouraging the wife. Making L-cuts with Matt. Adding more insane-Asian-model shots with Tim. Surreal experience."

Also sleeping at Bluefoot were Horgan, his wife Hillary, an E:60 producer, and McCormick, whose wife and kids had gone to New

Jersey. Hillary Horgan, who grew up in Florida, had spent the day editing 'bumps' on campus - but only after her husband had chauffeured her from their Avon home, and then to West Hartford.

"I was too afraid to drive in the snow," Hillary Horgan recalled.

Tennant came by, and was amazed at the scene.

"There were blankets, pillows, kids and bodies everywhere, on couches and floors, whatever space was available," he recalled.

Loftus chose to sleep at home.

"Night was the worst, sleeping in a cold drafty house trying to stay warm and hoping that each day you would get the power back," he recalled.

Power remained out Monday for much of central Connecticut while edits continued at Bluefoot. Shalom Khodabakhshian and her kids found a hotel room in Boston, at Logan Airport.

About 80 to 90 percent of the E:60 staff, Tennant learned, had lost power, and had their families displaced.

Loftus and Hogan logged 14 hours to complete "Kings of the Mountain". At one point Loftus ventured out for food.

"Lines were nuts," he said. "One pizza place had to turn us away because they ran out."

Khodabakhshian finished his edits late Monday, slept for three hours at his 43-degree home, and flew out at 5:45 a.m. Tuesday to Birmingham for the premier of his ESPN Films documentary "Roll Tide/War Eagle".

E:60's "Risk" show aired Tuesday evening, without a hitch.

The next day, Wednesday, Tennant recalled, "we had a smile on our face. People told us they enjoyed the show, but no one had any idea what went into putting that on the air."

That same day ESPN President George Bodenheimer issued a statement to employees:

*"It has always been true that the people of ESPN band together to meet any challenge placed before them. Its what has made this a special and exhilarating place to work.*

*"The last few days of 'Snowtober,' which continue to leave so many in the Northeast without power and heat - and their families in distress as a result - are the latest examples of this. Schools and businesses are closed. Fallen trees and power lines dot roads and streets. Municipalities have declared states of emergency. Amidst this turmoil, our people are meeting their professional obligations to each other and to sports fans nationwide in exceptional fashion. Anyone consuming any of our content would have no idea of what our people have dealt with to present it.*

*"From added meals for families in our cafes, to making showers available in a variety of Bristol campus locations, to the Kids Center going beyond to help families, to watching everyone pick each other up - the events on our campus these last few days have been truly inspiring.*

*"My sincere thanks and appreciation go to all who have demonstrated the best of ESPN during a difficult time."*

Nearly two weeks after the storm, with Connecticut power crews still making repairs, Tennant looked back at 'Risk'.

"To put on a show so unique and well-produced under those circumstances was truly remarkable," he said. "I couldn't be more proud."

posted by Steve Marantz on November 10, 2011

Posted by [E:60](#) at [7:43 PM](#)

Reactions: [funny \(0\)](#) [interesting \(0\)](#) [cool \(0\)](#)

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2011

Ray Rice's Barbershop

E:60 pushes for access to celebrity athletes off the field and away from the spotlight. Sometimes the personal door is jammed tight. Other times it creaks slightly ajar. And then, on occasion, it swings open to unfiltered light and sound.

Such was the case with Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice in "Like Mother Like Son". Producer Frank Saraceno asked Rice if he could shoot him at his barbershop, in his hometown of New Rochelle, N.Y., because Rice had worked at a barbershop as a kid. Rice agreed, and invited Saraceno and reporter Rachel Nichols to join him, on his bye week.

They met at "Flavaz" just before noon and Saraceno sized up the layout. The shop was large enough, he determined.

"The only real concern were the mirrors which of course are everywhere in a barber shop," said Saraceno. "I told my two-man crew to shoot like they weren't there so they wouldn't be concerned about being seen in the shots.

Regulars - tipped to Rice's visit - crowded the shop. This put to rest another concern - that the scene would lack energy and atmosphere.

To encourage relaxed banter, Saraceno urged Rice and the others to forget that a camera crew was in their midst.

"It took a few tries but once they finally got going, the conversation started to become very natural and free flowing," Saraceno said. "By the time Rachel stepped in to ask Ray questions the room was primed."

The scene yielded one particular gem - Rice's anecdote about his first encounter in pads with Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis.

Nonetheless, in the first cut, Saraceno downplayed the barbershop. The first cut began at the public housing project where Rice grew up.

But after a staff screening, coordinating producer Michael Baltierra urged that the barber shop lead the piece, to highlight Rice's outgoing personality and his close relationship with Lewis - who spoke of it in a separate interview.

"In retrospect it was a brilliant decision which helped give the piece a great kick-start and pacing," Saraceno said.

Posted by Steve Marantz on November 4, 2011

Posted by [E:60](#) at [2:08 PM](#)

Reactions: [funny \(0\)](#) [interesting \(0\)](#) [cool \(0\)](#)

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2011

Subtitling Ernest Willis

“The Good Life” is the story of Patrick Willis, All-Pro linebacker for the 49ers, and his ascent from rural poverty and an abusive father.

The story takes Willis back to his childhood in a rusted trailer outside of Bruceton, Tennessee. His mother abandoned his family when he was four. His father, Ernest, a part-time logger who drank and used drugs, raised him and his three siblings.

Willis and his siblings describe the physical beatings and threats they endured from their father before state officials placed them in a foster home.

Ernest Willis was interviewed by E:60 producer Beein Gim, and denied the allegations of his children.

But Ernest’s diction - colloquial and rapid - raised a question in edit: should he be subtitled?

Executive producer Andy Tennant asked E:60 staffers their opinion after they screened the story. Ernest was subtitled in the version they watched. The result was a 50-50 split.

Feature producer Lisa Binns, who did not work on the piece, opposed subtitles.

“The first time I watched I relied on the subtitles and the second time I avoided watching them to see if I could understand and I did,” said Binns.

Typically, subtitles are used to translate language foreign to the intended audience. They may be used for the same language as the intended audience - if the speaker has impaired speech. Subtitles can be used for song lyrics, rapid dialogue, and for accents unfamiliar to the intended audience. They are used to keep the viewer in the moment if speech poses a potential distraction.

Said Coordinating Producer Michael Baltierra: “When you subtitle somebody in our own language there’s always a concern of why are you doing this.”

In this case, Tennant and senior producers sought out multiple opinions, including that of senior vice-president/director of news Vince Doria. They reviewed the raw footage of the interview. And they asked the E:60 staff for its vote.

In the end, the decision was to subtitle Ernest Willis.

Tennant explained it thusly:

“If half the room can’t understand him clearly - if 50 percent of our audience is not going to understand his side of the story with clarity - maybe the way to go is to subtitle.

“Several factors came into play. One, he was not the main character...he was a secondary character. But more important, he was responding to accusations against him by his children - serious accusations. To be fair to him and to give him a platform to respond we thought it was an absolute necessity that people were 100 percent clear on what he was saying.”

E:60 logged no complaints about the Willis subtitles, Tennant pointed out. And if the decision had been reversed, perhaps nobody would have complained, either.

“When you produce this type of TV clarity is the most important thing,” he said. “You want to make sure it’s easy to follow and that the characters are easy to follow. We did what we thought was the fair and right thing to do.”

Going forward, Binns suggests that when a judgment call arises,

the staff first should view a version without subtitles.

"I'm suggesting as a best practice to show these things without subtitles to see how the room reacts," she said.

posted by Steve Marantz on October 24, 2011

Posted by [E:60](#) at [3:05 PM](#)

Reactions:    funny (0)    interesting (0)    cool (0)

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2011

## Jamie Convey, Radio Dreams and Judgment Calls



"Radio Dreams" is the story of Jamie Convey, a 10-year-old boy with cerebral palsy, his own Internet sports talk show, and indomitable spirit. The making of "Radio Dreams" raised a couple of sensitive issues around Jamie's disability.

One was subtitling. Jamie's speech can pose a challenge because cerebral palsy affects a part of the brain that controls motor skills such as speech. Producer Heather Lombardo and E:60 brass considered subtitling Jamie's comments.

Typically, subtitles may be used - for the same language as the intended audience - if the speaker has impaired speech. They also are used to translate language foreign to the intended audience. Subtitles can be used for song lyrics, rapid dialogue, and for accents unfamiliar to the intended audience.

"If he says something and the viewer has to stop and think, 'What?' and then misses the next ten seconds, it takes the viewer out of the moment," said Lombardo. "With subtitles there would be no questions about what he said."

But Lombardo was wary. She once produced a story that involved an aging heavyweight boxer, James 'Quick' Tillis, whose speech was slurred from his life in the ring. She subtitled Tillis, and incurred the wrath of his girlfriend.

"You made him look stupid!" the woman complained.

Lombardo stands by her decision, but says it can be a tough call.

"It's sensitive because you are dealing with pride and ego and emotion," she said.

In Jamie's case, because speech is central to his role as a broadcaster, subtitles were deemed "insensitive".

With careful screening of Jamie's shows - archived as well as the two shot by her crew - Lombardo found ample bites that were clear and understandable.

"It's about a kid doing a radio show," Lombardo said. "We want people to understand Jamie, but we don't want to embarrass him."

"Radio Dreams" posed another sensitive decision. Just past the five-minute mark it includes a scene with Jamie and his father, at an

outdoor track, where Jamie goes for exercise. From a distance, the camera catches Jamie, on his walker, exhausted and discouraged. At one point, he collapses onto his walker, with tears in his eyes. Then, with his father's help, he collects himself, and completes the circuit.

Lombardo's first inclination was to leave out the moment of discouragement, and show him at the moment of completion. But the more she thought about it, the more she liked the scene.

"In order to show what Jamie has accomplished - for the story to resonate - we had to show the challenges that he endures on a day-to-day basis," Lombardo said.

Yet, Lombardo knew that "Jamie might not be happy with that scene because it captured a vulnerable moment."

Another judgment call, but this was different. The track scene, she decided, is more about Jamie's courage and spirit than weakness. She used it.

After the piece aired Lombardo talked with the father, Jim Convey, and sure enough, Jamie is not happy with the track scene. On the other hand, as a veteran talk show host, he knows to respect her professional prerogative.

"He understood," Lombardo said.

Posted by Steve Marantz on October 13, 2011

Posted by [E:60](#) at [12:16 PM](#)

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